HARAMBEE

FLAME

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In This Issue:

THE FINAL CALL Editor Takes Issue With "African-American" as designation for American-born Africans; FROM OTHER SOURCES: Political Summit In New Orleans; Positive And Negative Views On Rap Music; African Consciousness Emerging; African Attorneys Under Attack In N.Y.; Racism In Brazil; Etc.

FINAL CALL Supports "Black"

It is interesting that this current emphasis on a general shift to "African-American" comes from a leadership circle that is evidently more "American" than "African," and more interested in acceptance and accommodation than in self-determination and empowerment. Nevertheless, I would like to offer some thoughts for you to mull over as you further consider what you have called "mere black."

The ancient name for that land mass which today has been called "Africa" all testify to its connection to the "black" people who lived there, such as Kemet, Egypt, Ethiopia, etc. Your research in this area will inform you of this fact. The term "Africa" is a new name for that land mass, and in fact was given to it by Caucasian/European oppressors. Check it out and see if you don't find that it is the name of a Roman general and explorer.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad said that land mass is properly called "Asia," as at one time the entire earth was known as "Asia" and we, the Black man and woman, were its original inhabitants, thus he said we were properly called the Asiatic Black man.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad also said that the whites call us African to divide us, so we would think the people on that continent are all that we have. But what of our brothers and sisters in Australia, the South Pacific, China, Japan, Mongolia; not only those who were spread throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America during the Triangular Slave Trade. You name it, we are there, and have been there.

Our conception of "Black" today has been tampered with by wickedly wise scientists through sophisticated mind-control techniques. They know that the unifying quality of the original people, our Black-

ness, is the only tool for unification and empowerment of all the original people of the earth today. In the Bible, in fact, even the Creator brought light out of darkness, and the Quran suggests that the Creator brought the universe out of "triple darkness."

"Black" ties us to more than a land mass; it ties us to the origins of the universe itself, as we are the Universal people. It ties us to the origins of the Earth, and to the origins of life on Earth.

We must be wary of "evil suggestions in firm resolutions," as the Holy Quran warns, for should we Black people, who now are facing the genocidal machinations of America, strive to now call ourselves after this "evil empire?" Is that the direction our progress lies in, getting closer to the beast?

Is this a cultural "offensive," as D. Ramona Edelin, President of the National Urban Coalition calls it, or is it a cultural retreat? Are we attempting to blend into the milieu of America by becoming a hyphenated community? Is it that "African-American" is more acceptable in polite circles than "Black"? But the analogy even breaks down there because Italy, Poland, Japan, Ireland are not synonymous with the continent called "Africa."

Due to the European colonization and establishment of political boundaries, the many countries of Africa are arbitrary divisions, even cutting across tribal homelands. If this analogy were to stand up, wouldn't we have to be "Yoruban-American" or "Hausan-American," or even "Ghanaian-American" or "Nigerian-American"?

Does "Black" conjure race at a time when forces are trying to paint the world transparent? Will those in the future who work for the rights of Black people who advocate Black uplift be arrested

and charged with breaking laws against racism?

And consider this. On our course toward self-assertion, if we individually choose the names of our forefathers, should we now name our collective self here in America once again after the slave-master?

In conclusion, I don't care what direction false leaders try to steer the Black community, the Black Nation, the road toward our future must be one of independence. I don't believe the hype, and still believe that "Black is beautiful"--"Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud." But I am also Black and aware that my BLACKNUSS links me to the original family of man on earth, to the universe and ultimately to the Supreme Being.

FLAME Editor's note: The above is from a letter by A. Wali Muhammad, Editor of THE FINAL CALL, a newspaper of the Nation of Islam. Brother Muhammad was responding to the editorial in the March FLAME in which we supported referring to American-born Africans as "Africans" rather than "blacks," pointed out some problems with referring to ourselves as "African-Americans," but held "African-American" as being a step in the proper direction.

We take this opportunity to respond to some of the issues that Brother Muhammad raises. As to the issue of the origin of "Africa" as a name for the continent of our ancestors, there is considerable debate. While some scholars maintain that the name was given by Europeans, there are others who claim that the name actually came from an Arabic word, "Afriquia." There are others who insist that "Africa" actually comes from the ancient Egyptian. Whatever is the truth in this regard, the fact is that Africa is the birthplace of our ancestors and, from the available evidence, it would appear that Africa is the birthplace of humankind, inclusive of all racial stocks.

Brother Muhammad states that our blackness is the only tool for unification and empowerment "of all the original people of the earth today." However, there appears to be no case in history in which an oppressed people has been motivated and organized by a color-based appeal. Rather, land and religion have been the powerful motive forces. Clearly, at least at this point, we African folks can not call upon a single religion as a motivating or unifying force. We are followers of traditional African religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc. But all of us who share the physical Africoid characteristics, in varying degrees, of dark skin, wooly hair, broad noses, and thick lips can call upon a common land of origin--Africa. This common land of origin, and the name by which we call it, is inclusive of cultural achievements, related languages, a rich history, and countless heroic men and women.

"Black" on the other hand is essentially a physical term which speaks of nothing but color. And we are, in fact, much more than a color, much more than a shade of skin. As we've stated before, it makes as much sense for us to refer to ourselves as a mere color of skin as it would to call ourselves "broad," owing to the broadness of our noses.

Brother Muhammad makes the point that the very persons who are being given credit for ushering in "African-American" identify more with America and its values than with Africa. He is, in all probability, correct. The HARAMBEE FLAME, however, rarely uses the term "African-American" but, rather, "African" or "American-born African." We recognizethat much of what America is and stands for is starkly opposed to our interests and functions in direct contradiction to our traditional values.

In short, we should have no shame in being "black." But "black" simply does not give us the strength we need.

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.) is a pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems that make effective use of imagery, that have beauty and power, and do not sacrifice such for sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme.

Send submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME
Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.
Attn: Editor/Mondo
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68502-0500

From Other Sources

African-American Summit To Be Held In New Orleans

"Over 4,000 delegates...from 75 national organizations in 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands are being invited to participate in the nation's first African-American Summit in New Orleans, April 21-23. The report and recommendations for developing an African-American Agenda for the year 2,000 and beyond by the nonpartisan conference will be presented to national and political leaders said General Chairman Richard Hatcher...

"Hatcher, the former mayor of Gary, Indiana, who convened the first black political convention in 1972 and similar conferences in 1976 and 1980, was chosen as chairman by the convening committee composed of black Democrats, Republicans, ministers, civil rights leaders and independent politicians..

"Fourteen major areas of urgent concern will be the focus of panel discussions on the African-American family, health, foreign policy, crime, drugs, civil rights, economic and political empowerment, housing and the media. One of the most significant issues facing planners is the complicated delegate selection process based upon the participating organizations...

"The projected 4,108 delegates will be selected from three categories (a)local community activists (b)elected officials and (c)at large..."

-Above passages excerpted from "First African-American Summit Agenda; Political Empowerment And More," which appears on pages 1 and 5 of the 4/15/89 MILWAUKEE COURIER.

Rap: Positive And Negative Sides

"The most significant pop music innovation of the 1980s is rap music, sometimes called hip hop. As an art form, rap music emphasizes rhythm and searing lyrics. As a social phenomenon, rap music testifies to the pain of being poor and angry in a land of many dollars...

"Rappers such as Run-D.M.C., Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince, LL Cool J, Salt 'N' Pepa, and Ice-T, are the new celebrities in black America. Fans memorize their lyrics, copy their clothing, adopt their argot, and emulate their expressed attitudes...

"...Rap music fans are not a monolithic or homogenous group; examine them closely and you will find significant differences in musical styles, lifestyles, and worldviews; however, there are several prominent negative traits shared by many of these musicians: worship of crass materialism, criminal adoration, and hyper-sexuality.

"While one-third of black American families are mired in poverty, many rap musicians flaunt wealth in the form of dukey ropes(fat gold chains), project gold(huge gold hoop earrings), gold rings, gold watches, designer clothes, expensive cars and jeeps, and large sums of cash...

"...The flaunting of wealth by rap musicians sends several messages to black teenagers: success is a big car, jewelry, and designer clothes; rap musicians have beaten the system; and you are not worth much if you have not beaten the system...

"A survey of the slang of rap musicians will reveal a preponderance of terms and phrases relating to criminal behavior, for example, beam me up, Scotty(give me crack), bite(to steal), dustin(getting too high or drunk), megablast(large amount of crack), nine(9mm pistol), rock star(crack addict),

steel(pistol), and tax(to assault)...

"Even the casual listener of rap music recognizes the the prominence of sexual themes in the lyrics. Indeed, sexual prowess is a staple of the male rappers lyrical repertoire. Every woman, we are told, wants a sexual union with def(great) street-tough rappers...

"Songs that promote indiscriminate sexual unions also promote child illegitimacy, venereal diseases, and the debasement of women...

"...rap musicians are teaching young black males that their self-worth is linked to the size of their 'jimbrowskis' and their ability to 'skeez' women...

"There are some positive role models, for example: JJ Fad, and DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince... Some prominent rap musicians have incorporated anti-crime and anti-drug messages into their songs..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Rap Musicians: Knights Or Knaves," which appears on pages 3 and 4 of the Spring 1989 AIM QUARTERLY(Chicago)

African Consciousness Creeping Onto The Scene

..."In cities across the U.S., African-American youth suddenly are embracing symbols of their once-disparaged heritage. Images of the African continent; the colors red, black and green; and othe insignia of African nationalism are appearing on everything from T-shirts to bumper stickers. Trend-watching clothing stores in black neighborhoods throughout the country are stocking racks of African-oriented items...

"...many observers see it as the initial stages of a reinvigorated black power movement. A new sens-

ibility is dawning, they argue, and it is being manifested across the class spectrum from inner cities to college campuses...

"...Ramon Wade, a young black Chicagoan who hosts a radio program featuring rap music...says the new attitude about their African roots is charging up the street youth with whom he comes in contact. 'I do a lot of rap shows in different neighborhoods, and I'm telling you, brothers love to hear raps about strong, responsible black men and the glorious history of the mother continent. There are some new role models being born'...

-Above passage excerpted from "Young Blacks Discovering A New Sense Of Community," which appears on page 8 of the 4/19-25/89 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago).

African Attorneys Under Attack In New York

"Lawyers representing C. Vernon Mason, one of two attorneys charged with obstruction of justice in the controversial Tawana Brawley case, are themselves charging New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams with pursuing a 'vendetta' to disbar their client. They are calling for the release of Brawley grand jury minutes 'already leaked to the New York Times'...

"Proceedings against Maddox and Mason came to a standstill early this year when a scandal surrounding disciplinary committee general counsel Michael Gentile's conduct of office erupted.

"Gentile was assigned the task of conducting an impartial investigation of Mason and Maddox. Reports in the press indicated that not only had Gentile written to Abrams, asking him to provide the case against them, but that he had also failed to pursue serious client complaints of theft and

courtroom drug use against attorney Joel Steinberg.(Steinberg was later convicted of manslaughter in the death of his 6-year-old illegally adopted daughter.)...

"The new chief counsel in the disbarment proceedings, Hal Lieberman, has subpoenaed Mason's records of the Brawley case, demanding they be turned over by April 27. Defense lawyers have asked for a stay to appeal the subpoena. Lieberman has also asked Mason to produce Tawana Brawley as a witness. .."

-Above passages excerpted from "Black Attorney Attorney Fights 'Vendetta'", which appears on page 9 of the 4/19/89 THE GUARDIAN(New York).

Racism And Its Manifestations In Brazil

..."There are two countries in Brazil: the modern and the archaic, the industrialized and the underdeveloped, the rich and the poor; the white and the black.

"Social and political activists face a tough battle in Brazil to reduce the gap between these two Brazils. They must work against the pervasive denial of a race problem and correct societal stereotypes of blacks...The prime sources of information in Brazil are radio and television which operate under the scrutiny of the controlling elite. The media promote negative stereotypes of blacks. White is the ideal in society. The pages of the most popular Brazilian magazines, VEJA, MANCHETE, and ISTO E, portray a more Scandanavian than Brazilian people.

"Brazilians see whites in positions of power, read about the white settlers of Brazil in history books, and on the social page of the newspapers. They see blacks in the most menial positions, read about blacks as slaves, and in criminal reports.

Moreover, 'in Brazil, it is prohibited, not in writing, but it is prohibited in practice, to teach African history and culture in the schools. Thus, blacks do not know their history. Their culture is warped, depicted as folkloric and inferior', stated Ana Celia(a member of Movimento Negro Unificado)...

"Blacks in Brazil try to become as white as possible. In name, this is achieved with the innumerable color categories. In the U.S. a light-skinned black is considered black. In Brazil, a light-skinned black is generally not labeled black, but by any one of over 150 descriptive color names, referring to all shades of black...This disunification of the Afro-Brazilian population is cited as one of the underlying reasons behind the absence of a massive Civil Rights Movement in Brazil, in contrast to the history of the United States.

"Recently, however, Afro-Brazilian political and cultural groups have increased their efforts to raise consciousness among Afro-Brazilians and rectify pervading stereotypes. Ana Celia maintains that Afro-Brazilians never lost their African culture to the dominating class, and thus retained forms of resistance including dance forms(capoeira), religion(Candomble, Umbanda), and foods(Aca-

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raje, Caruru). Various groups, political and cultural, aiming to raise awareness in the Afro-Brazilian community, have centered around these strong African elements. These movements are witnessed in the recent, unprecedented explosion of carnival groups with African titles, celebrating their African identity.

"Leaders of the Afro-Brazilian community, however, worry that carnival serves to reinforce negative black stereotypes. The integration of African culture highly visible in carnival does not represent a parallel integration of the Afro-Brazilian in Brazilian society. Black activists fear carnival creates an outlet for social discontent, but not social change..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Brazil--No Racial Democracy," which appears on pages 5-7 of the Spring 1989 AIM QUARTERLY(Chicago).

Southern African Development Coordinating Conference Battles South Africa's Tentacles

"(SADCC) consists of nine states, six of which are land-locked. Three of them, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, are using Durban and Port Elizabeth for their exports and imports. More importantly, these three former British Protectorates are linked with South Africa in a customs union called Southern Africa Customs Union(SACU)...

"South Africa administers SACU, collects duties on foreign goods and then gives a percentage of the amount collected to the three other states. Though the percentage is minimal, it gives Botswana 30 percent of its total revenue. South Africa has the advantage in that its goods enter duty-free.

"Observers believe that the next move will be for South Africa to invite its puppet states Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and Ciskei to join SACU. This would put the other states in a dilemma, for like the rest of the OAU(Organization for African Unity) states they do not recognize these apartheid creations. What option have they then?

"Consider the case of Botswana. As in most of

SADCC states, the people of Botswana do not own their resources. The minerals which now account for nearly 80 percent of their exports are owned by subsidiaries of the Anglo-American, such as De Boers. These subsidiaries operate the diamond mines at Orapa and Jwaneng near Kenya. Diamonds accounted for 72 percent of the total exports in 1986.

"Further collaboration between Botswana and South Africa was evident when it was reported that thee deal for the establishment of a soda ash plant was clinched between the Botswana government and African Explosives and Chemical Industries(AECI), at one time the largest industrial undertaking in South Africa...

"The significance of this deal was highlighted by a Botswana correspondent who wrote, 'A percentage of Sua Pan produce will be transported to AECI's factory in Saselberg, also associated with South Africa's military, presumably for the production of chlorine and caustic soda'.

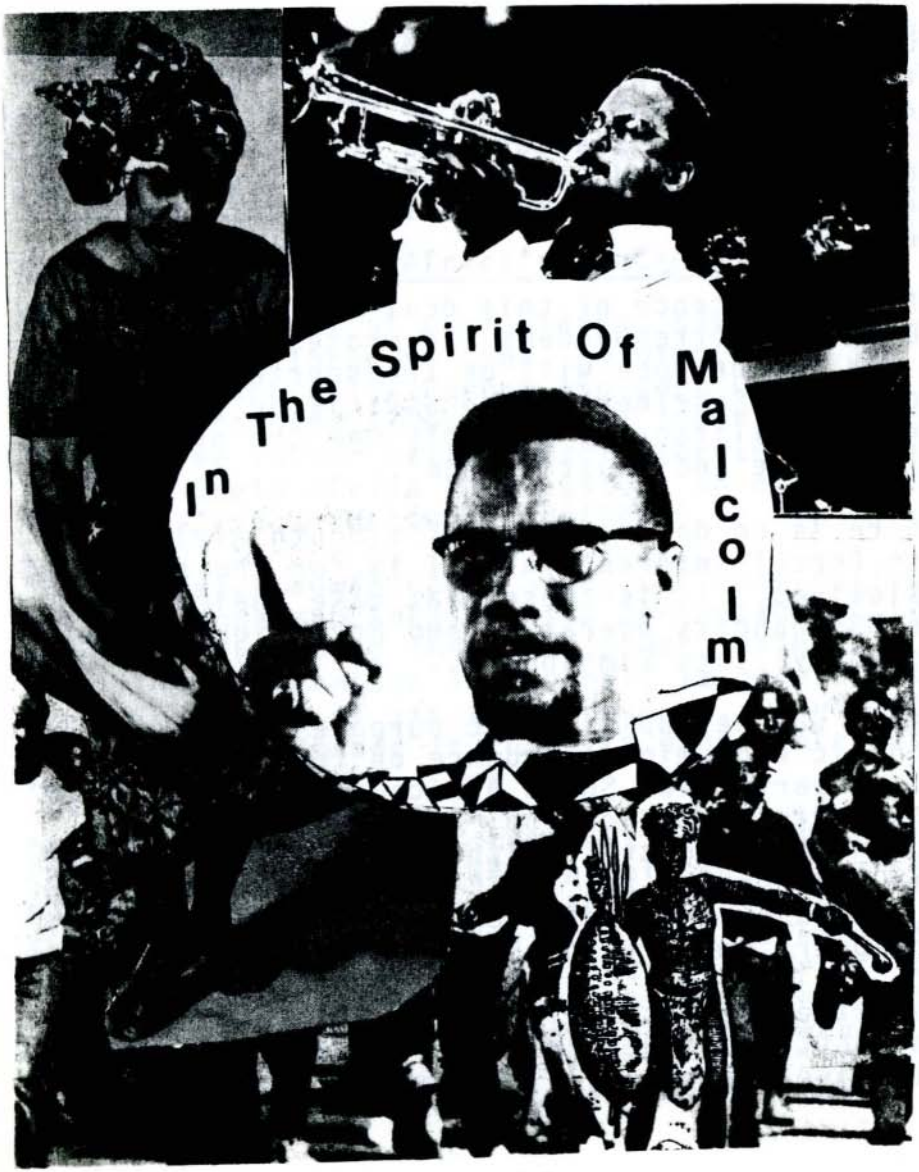
"There is no doubt that SADF's(South Africa Defense Force) interest in AECI is for the supply of explosives. It is these that make their way to the MNR bandits operating and Mozambique and making forays into Zimbabwe...

"SADCC was set up with the purpose of lessening economic economic dependence on foreign powers and in particular South Africa, in the fields of transport, communication, energy, agriculture, mining and industry. With the exception of Tanzania and Angola, the SADCC states have ownership of the major means of production in the hands of foreigners, mostly South Africans.

"Nevertheless, it is in the field of transport that SADCC has been able to report success. Not only have its ports of Dar es Salaam, Beira, Map-

to, Nacala and Lobite been modernised, but 63 ercent of its imports from overseas pass through hem..."

-Above passages excerpted from "The Significance Of The Launching Of The Economic Community Of Southern Africa," which appears on page 17 of the Feb-Apr THE BURNING SPEAR.



Back In Time

"Harlem was 'just like the Arabian Nights', to Duke(Ellington), but when Sweatman's engagement (Duke had a job as part of a vaudeville act in Harlem's Lafayette Theatre with the band of Wilbur Sweatman, a show business veteran whose big act was playing three clarinets at once.) ended, the Washington trio(of Sonny Greer, Duke, and Little Otto Hardwick) found little work. Reluctant to send home for money, they scraped along from hand to mouth. Duke and Sonny hustled pool halls. 'We might start with a quarter', Duke remembered. 'The minute we got two dollars, we'd quite, go home dress up, order two steak dinners, give the girl a quarter, and have a quarter left for tomorrow'. Pianists Fats Waller and Willie(The Lion) Smith, to whom James P. Johnson introduced the young men, helped out with a bit of money now and then and helped the ever-observant Duke even more in forming his own piano style. But when Duke found $15 in the street, the trio blew it on three square meals and three coach tickets to Washington.

"The next year Duke tried again. Elmer Snowden, Toby Hardwick, Artie Whetsol and Sonny Greer had gone to New York on the promise of a job and had sent for Duke when they needed a pianist. Ellington traveled to New York in ducal style, riding in the parlor car, eating in the diner and spending his last change on a taxi. He arrived to find that the job had fallen through and his friends were as broke as he was."

-from GIANTS OF JAZZ: DUKE ELLINGTON BY Stanley Dance.

Announcements

"For 15 years AIM Magazine, a small voice that carries far, has been working to make a difference. From what we hear, we are doing something. But are we doing all we can do? We would like to have your thinking on some problems facing America,--the deficit, the trade imbalance, racism, the situations in the Mideast, South Africa, South America, etc. Some problems are more complex than others. For example, how much does the practice of racism in America affect America's practice of international politics? Let us have your 800 to 2,000 word essay on any aspect of problems facing America. 1st prize, $100.00; two 2nd prizes, $50.00; four 3rd prizes, $25.00. Deadline: August 15, 1989." Send submissions to: AIM MAGAZINE
P.O. Box 20554
Chicago, ILL 60620

WRITE ON Newsletter is published quarterly and "is designed to fill a void in maintream America for the Black writers and visual artists whom we define as being of African-American heritage or one who writes about the Black experience in the United States, Caribbean or Africa. We provide a forum for the work of such artists, act as a support system and as a networking possibility, so the Black artists can find and, if necessary, create markets for their work." For subscription and other information, write to: WRITE ON Newsletter; Rejoti Publishing; P.O. Box 852; Saddlebrook, N.J.; 07662.

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY is the newspaper of the New Afrikan Peoples Organization(N.A.P.O.). It describes itself as an organization which "organizes Black people to fight for complete freedom for themselves and other oppressed people in the world...(and which) teaches our youth about themselves, their history, and how to fight the evils of crime, gang violence and drugs..." Write to: BAMN/NAPO; P.O. Box 31762; Jackson, MS; 39286.

Photographs Ella Robinson

Years of unfurled fatigue

Decades of usurpation

Takes its toll.

The markets, the festivals,

Dow Jones entrapped

In jails of interest

And litigations gagged by News,

Boredom prescribed by TV

And saints manacled to a swamp

With opportunities riding

Hard. What a photograph!

Precious possessions, real

And imagined. Amerika

Consumes our lives

As do quadroons of dead niggers

Or redskins. The daggers

Of our lives pierce the soft flesh:

We swagger, we stagger

Against our restitution,

Resheath our knives,

Point our feet toward

A presumptuous storm.